

Message Text

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-11 SCI-06 L-03 IO-14

INT-08 DLOS-07 CEQ-02 EPA-04 SMI-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03

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PASS NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE, WASHDC

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OCON TBIO JA

SUBJ: IMPACT ON JAPAN OF CONSERVATIONIST MOVEMENT

REF: A) TOKYO 2067 B) TOKYO 3287 C) TOKYO 3895

SUMMARY: STILL DIFFICULT ASSESS IMPACT WHALE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT. JAPANESE WHALING INTERESTS HAVE MOUNTED COUNTER OFFENSIVE. GOJ POSITION HAS NOT CHANGED. PUBLIC HAS BEEN LESS THAN ELECTRIFIED BY ISSUE. JAPANESE LAND WHALING CENTERS HAVE MADE REQUEST TO GOJ TO CONTINUE WHALING. END SUMMARY.

1. NOAA REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON JAPAN OF WHALE CONSERVATIONIST MOVEMENT SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO MEASURE. GOJ AND FISHING INDUSTRY OFFICIALS WOULD NATURALLY TEND TO DENY SUCCESS OF MOVEMENT IN JAPAN.

2. WITH THIS IN MIND, EMBASSY COMMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS TO DATE ON CONSERVATION MOVEMENT FOLLOWS:

A) ARTICLES CONCERNING PROJECT JONAH AND ITS ANTI-WHALING
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CAMPAIGN HAVE APPEARED FROM TIME TO TIME IN JAPANESE PRESS,

IN BOTH ENGLISH AND JAPANESE EDITIONS. COPIES OF ENGLISH ARTICLES AND OCCASIONALLY TRANSLATIONS OF JAPANESE ARTICLES HAVE BEEN ROUTINELY POUCHED TO WASHINGTON.

B) JAPANESE WHALING COMPANIES HAVE FORMED A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INFORM JAPANESE PUBLIC OF QTE REAL FACTS UNQTE ON STATUS OF DOMESTIC WHALING INDUSTRY, MAINLY TO COUNTER WHAT THEY CONSIDER ADVERSE AND MISLEADING INFORMATION BEING CIRCULATED BY CONSERVATIONIST GROUP. (REF A).

C) SPECIAL COMMITTEE HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN PUTTING OUT ARTICLES CRITICIZING CONSERVATION MOVEMENT AND EXPLAINING STATUS OF DOMESTIC WHALING INDUSTRY AND GREAT IMPORTANCE OF WHALING TO JAPAN FROM STANDPOINT OF DIET AND EMPLOYMENT. EMBASSY HAS SO FAR NOT SEEN ANY SPECIAL MATERIAL IN ENGLISH PUBLISHED BY COMMITTEE SINCE ITS FORMATION.

D) EXCEPT FOR THOSE IN GOVT, INDUSTRY AND CONSERVATION GROUP DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND GREATLY CONCERNED OVER WHALING PROBLEM, PUBLIC REACTION TO MOVEMENT DIFFICULT TO MEASURE. REGFISHATT'S OBSERVATION IS THAT GENERAL PUBLIC DOES NOT SEEM GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT ISSUE. THEIR PARAMOUNT CONCERN IN PAST FEW MONTHS HAS BEEN INFLATION, HIGHER WAGES, ENERGY CRISIS, ETC.

E) GOJ AND WHALING INDUSTRY OFFICIALS TAKE DIM VIEW OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE EMOTIONAL AND IRRATIONAL APPROACH TO WHALING PROBLEM TAKEN BY CONSERVATIONIST GROUP, IN PARTICULAR TACTIC OF UTILIZING CHILDREN TO ASSIST IN ANTI-WHALING CAMPAIGN. ON BASIS OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY CHILDREN, THEY CONSIDER CHILDREN BEING MISINFORMED. ON BASIS OF FEW LETTERS RECEIVED BY EMBASSY, REFFISHATT CAN READILY UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERN.

F) IMPACT OF BOYCOTT MOVEMENT HAS BEEN COVERED IN REFTEL C.

G) EMBASSY IMPRESSION IS THAT GOJ WISHES PROBLEM WOULD QTE BLOW AWAY UNQTE. FONOFF MOST NATURALLY CONCERNED OVER IMPACT WHALING ISSUE WILL HAVE IN OTHER AREAS AND ON PRESENTLY AMICABLE RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND US. HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT HAS CONTINUED TO STRONGLY SUPPORT POSITION TAKEN BY FISHERIES AGENCY AND FISHING INDUSTRY.

G) FINALLY, IF SUCCESS OF MOVEMENT WERE TO BE MEASURED STRICTLY IN TERMS OF SOFTENING OF GOJ POSITION, THEN MOVEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE JUDGED AS NOT HAVING SUCCEEDED IN VIEW INFLEXIBLE POSITION STILL MAINTAINED BY GOJ. EMBASSY BELIEVES JAPAN HAS TOO MUCH STAKE IN WHALE FISHERY AND WILL

NOT AGREE TO A WHALING MORATORIUM UNDER ALMOST ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. ON OTHER HAND, MOVEMENT HAS SERVED TO KEEP PROBLEM SOMEWHAT BEFORE PUBLIC EYE, ALTHOUGH PUBLIC HAS SO FAR SEEMED TO SHOW LITTLE INTEREST IN ISSUE EXCEPT FOR SELECT LIMITED GROUPS. ALSO, ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE BY FISHING INDUSTRY TO COUNTER PUBLICITY GENERATED BY CONSERVATIONISH GROUP CAN, IT ITSELF, BE INTERPRETED AS REFLECTING SOME MEASURE OF SUCCESS ON PART OF ANTI-WHALING MOVEMENT. BIGGEST INDICATION SHOULD COME WHEN INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION CONVENES IN JUNE.

3. FYI. SHISAH TSUSHIN, FISHERIES DAILY, IN APR 24 ISSUE REPORTED THAT LOCAL ASSEMBLIES OF CITIES WHERE LAND WHALING STATIONS ARE LOCATED, SUCH AS HAMANAKA (HOKKAIDO) ONAGAWA AND AYUKAWA (NORTHERN JAPAN), HAVE APPEALED TO GOJ FOR CONTINUATION OF WHALING SINCE LIVELIHOOD OF THEIR COMMUNITIES ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON WHALING. CITY OF TAIJI (WAKAYAMA PREFECTURE), WHICH ALSO HAS WHALING STATION, HAS REFUSED DR. SPONG'S REQUEST TO USE WHALING MUSEUM FOR HIS WHALING LECTURE. SHOESMITH

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